

War is terrible



**ASSIGN
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Saying that 'war is terrible' is such a simple statement but makes us think of the emotional stress and physical pain. There is a wide variety of texts that explore the ideas about war. Various composers agree that war is a terrible thing and isn't necessary. There are some composers however who believe that war is necessary and that people should do their duty and fight for their country. These can be shown by a range of techniques. The war poetry of Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "Anthem for Doomed Youth", conveys the horrors of war and of Wilfred Owens experience of war rather than the account of the experience itself.

This is conveyed through the language and poetic techniques of imagery, repetition, metaphors, similes and even irony. "Tomorrow When the War Began" examines the war on a more obvious scale. "Trumpet Calls" looks at war as a noble thing and demonstrates the idea that people must support war and do their duty for their country. This is shown through colour, size, layout and framing. In the poem "Anthem for Doomed Youth", Owen explains about death violence and sacrifice of the youth. Firstly the title itself has a significant use of assonance.

Doomed youth is right; there were young men, some really young. By using the rhetorical question and simile of "What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?" strongly affects us with the image of the slaughterhouse and the idea of men being treated less human and no more important than cattle which are lead to the slaughter without feeling. It shows us the mistreatment of men being constantly killed and has no chance, just like cattle being slaughtered for meat. It solemnly shows how those who die in war do not receive the normal ceremonies that we are used to, to honour the dead.

Throughout the poem Wilfred Owen uses a lot of comparisons; one of these is the simile between a typical funeral in a church and what would happen to a soldier killed in battle. For example he compares the church bells with the noise of the gunfire; the prayers with the rapid rifle fire; the choirs with the wailing of shells; the candles held by altar boys with the lights of the sky reflected in the dead eyes of the soldiers. After reading "Anthem for Doomed Youth" the entire perspective on how terrible the war is can be changed.

The poem "Dulce Et Decorum Est", Owen conveys that government may encourage and force you to fight for your country, but, in reality, fighting for your country is simply sentencing yourself to unnecessary death. In line 1 "bent double, like old beggars under sacks" is a simile, which compares the men to marching to beggars. Beginning with the image of men "bent double" creates the possibility that the soldiers really have become two people: the men they were before the war and the creatures they're now. The imagery created by describing "the white eyes withering in his face", is horrendous.

It's almost like their eyes live a life on their own: they have detached from the working of the body as a whole. In that same quote there is also alliteration which seeks to re-create the distortion taking place on the young man's face. The unusual simile "devils sick of sin" shows the extreme of human cruelty and depravity. We can cause anguish and atrocities that would even sicken Satan. In Owens opinion, this couldn't be further from the truth. Emphasizing the gruesome details of his real experience during the war demonstrates to the readers the emptiness of war. "The Trumpet Calls" is

a World War 1 poster which was used to convince civilians to join the war. The caption is “ The Trumpet Calls” which is drawn in a bold red font designed to capture the viewers’ attention. Red symbolise the blood lost in the battle and acts as a plea for more people to join up and replace the lives of those that were lost doing their “ duty. ” This is highlighted by the word “ Calls”. In the frame, the main image is a soldier seen in brown colour standing above other soldiers that are fighting; some of them injured which makes this soldier stand out as he is above the other soldiers.

The vector directs us as the viewers to the civilians in the background who are shown a shadowy grey colour which is used to illustrate their lack of involvement in the war. The hand of the soldier points downwards in a gesture-like way as if inviting civilians to help out the soldiers below him to fight in the war. This poster unlike the other texts is a positive view on war used to try and persuade people to participate in war, but the reality is that such posters led young men to their deaths.

In the documentary, “ Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam”, the director Bill Couturie illustrates to us what the Vietnam War was like. He shows us the conditions of war and also the effect this had on the soldiers and their families. The letters that are read out basically act as a chronicle diary of physical, emotional and psychological challenges and the experiences of the soldiers. One soldier “ This is all wrong” and others write things like “ We are all scared”, “ This was my first experience of war and it was ugly”, “ It’s just a constant siege here”. These letters saying these things ighlight to us that the conditions of war are brutal, horrible and scarring and that it was an unknown entity to the soldiers as it was “ Jungle

Warfare” which was alien to most as no other wars were fought this way. There is also real footage of the war, news reels and facts and figures about the war and the amount of casualties, none is made up. This helps us to understand the amount of death and destruction of war and allows us to visually see how brutal the fighting in war is. It makes the viewer feel sympathetic to those who fought and died in war and their families. It also highlights the pitiful waste of life that is lost to war.

The soundtrack is made up of songs from the same era. At the start the songs seem more upbeat and happy and as the film progresses they begin to sound more sad and depressing. This is used to represent the soldier’s feelings about going to war at the start being happy and excited for a new adventure and those feelings changing as they witness the horrors of war and begin to start questioning this war. The documentary shows us the death and destruction that occurs from war. Men put their life on the line and were often killed; death was a daily occurrence as this is how war is. In the Trenches it wasn’t just people getting killed by gunfire.

Disease and infection was very common in the trenches as there was little to no hygiene there. Rats and lice spread diseases. In the winter it would have been, cold, wet, muddy, snowy and generally unpleasant. Also people were emotionally scarred as their friend on the battlefield could easily be killed. Life in the conditions of war is very difficult and unpleasant. “ Dulce et Decorum Est”, “ Anthem for Doomed Youth”, “ Tomorrow when the war began” and “ Trumpet Calls”, are very good and clear examples of how terrible the war is and what the soldiers went through, conveyed by film, poetic and literary techniques.